REFLECTIONS

ON THE

PRESENT STATE

OF OUR

EAST-INDIA Affairs.

[Price 1 *s.* 6 *d.*]

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EAST INDIA Affairs.

With many INTERESTING ANECDOTES,
Never before made public.

By a Gentleman long reſident in INDIA

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THE

PRESENT STATE

OF OUR

EAST INDIA Affairs.

THE love of our country ſtands foremoſt in the rank of human virtues; it is of ſuch high eſteem that every man aſpires at being thought poſſeſſed of it. Its value to ſociety being ineſtimable, no wonder it is ſo ſtrongly inculcated on individuals. We are taught to ward off the *danger of our country* at the riſque of our own ſafety and lives. Can any one then who ſees this danger with large ſtrides approaching her, ſtand aloof, and not even give her the alarm? I do not pretend to be the only ſagacious perſon in theſe kingdoms; but if others who do perceive it ſhould, through ſelfiſhneſs or indolence,

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hold their peace, I, who have an equal intereſt with every other perſon in the general weal, ſhall make uſe of the privilege which that gives me, to ſpeak. I have reaſon to think that the generality of people do not conceive the common good and ſafety to be ſo highly intereſted in our commerce to the *Eaſt Indies* as they really are; but being convinced that this trade is of the laſt and greateſt import to England, and alſo apprehending it to be in imminent danger, I hope that it will not be judged impertinent in me to communicate my fears; which, though they ſhould at preſent prove vain, yet will they anſwer one excellent end, viz. that rouſing the attention of the publick to this grand, though neglected object, it may be induced to keep a watchful eye over the conduct of that company, which is by the nation entruſted with the charge of what is termed by a judicious and well-informed writer, *a grand wheel of commerce, ſetting all the others in motion*. My intention however is not to ſtrike invidiouſly at the being of the company; ſo far from it, I ſhall in the ſequel endeavour to remove the popular prejudices which have been raiſed againſt it, being ſatisfied that inſtead of being *prejudicial*, it is abſolutely neceſſary to the *exiſtence* of *this trade*, which in any other way could not ſubſiſt

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at all: But my deſign is to prevent its hiding from the eye of the public, by ſkinning it over, a wound which it hath neither the ſkill nor power to cure, while the corruption proceeds inwards, till it ſeiſes and taints the vital parts.

As little has been written of late on the ſubject of our company's affairs, previouſly to entering on the preſent ſituation of them, I ſhall give a ſhort and general view of the importance of this trade to England, and of the intereſt the nation has in the conduct and well-being of the company. And though this may ſeem ſuperfluous and unneceſſary to ſuch as have already ſtudied it, yet to ſuch as have not had leiſure to look into theſe matters, it will ſerve to elucidate what I am going to ſay on the ſubject, as well as by intereſting them, engage their attention. I ſhall next take upon me to give a ſhort account of the nature of this great company, as alſo of the manner how, and by whom, their affairs are conducted in Europe; and ſhall afterwards proceed to a detail of the nature and ſituation of their affairs in India.

Having before declared my reaſons for communicating my ſentiments on this ſubject to the public, I need not mention that prejudice and envy can hold no place here; and I further hope that this integrity and

uprightneſs of the in ention will throw a covering over the nakedneſs and imperfections of the execution.

I am ſenſible that the value of our Eaſt-India trade has been greatly depreciated in the eyes of my countrymen, by arguments uſed as well againſt the general utility of this trade to Europe, as againſt the particular benefit ariſing from it to England. Theſe two, in this caſe, very diſtinct intereſts, have been on this occaſion blended together, and the force of both united, in order to ſink it in the eſtimation of the public; whereas to form a proper judgment of its worth, theſe two intereſts ought to be moſt carefully ſeparated. In forming the calculation betwixt Europe and India, it hath been advanced that bullion being the true ſign of trade, and the balance in that article being greatly againſt the former, it muſt of conſequence be a very loſing trade to Europe. It is not at all material to my purpoſe to decide this point, which is diſputed, and which to England is almoſt entirely ſpeculative; her buſineſs is to examine whether it be or be not a loſing trade to her. If ſhe gains while other European nations loſe, it is naturally more the buſineſs of thoſe loſers than of England to obviate this evil; it would be weak and abſurd in her to ſacrifice an evident intereſt to the general good

good of Europe, whilſt ſhe has neighbours who would very induſtriouſly take up what ſhe for ſuch end laid down. But granting bullion to be the true criterion of trade, and that half of what our company ſends to purchaſe her cargo in the Indies conſiſts of that article, and never returns from thence; yet if the company doth replace from other countries a ſum equal to that which ſhe exports to India, and this by her charter ſhe is obliged to do, that trade cannot even by this ſtandard be deemed a loſing one to England. The odium annexed to the idea of monopoly and excluſive trade has alſo ſuggeſted arguments aimed either obliquely through the ſides of the company, or directly againſt the trade itſelf. It is ſaid that the nation has but a diſtant concern in the intereſt of the company, who dividing the benefit and profits ariſing from their trade amongſt the proprietors of their ſtock, the exiſtence of it is of little more conſequence to the nation, than that of ſome great trading houſes in London, which if they fail, their place will be ſupplied by others. But let people be cautious in diſtinguiſhing betwixt a trade itſelf, and any particularity in the manner of carrying on that trade: It will appear that every perſon in England, although he be no proprietor in the company's ſtock, is intereſted in the

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ſucceſs of this trade, even as every landed gentleman is concerned in the ſafety of the national credit, although he may hold no ſhare in the funds. Whether the being of this company is or is not neceſſary to the nation, will more properly fall under conſideration in another place; the queſtion at preſent is not whether this trade ſhall or ſhall not be carried on excluſively, but whether England ſhall or ſhall not hold a ſhare in it at all. The direct arguments uſed againſt this trade are, that the wearing of India piece-goods prejudices our own woollen and ſilk manufactures; and that the exportation of *India* goods is diſadvantageous, becauſe it is conjectured to leſſen the conſumption of our own manufactures, in thoſe countries to which the produce of *India* is exported. To give place here to the anſwers which have ſufficiently refuted theſe ill-grounded cavils, would occaſion too great a digreſſion from my main point; but by preſenting a view of the trade of our Eaſt-India company, which I do not however take upon me to give as a juſt, but as a much undervalued calculation, every man will be able to judge for himſelf, of what import it is to the nation. Suppoſing then the company doth export every year to the Eaſt-Indies to the amount of only 1,500,000 l. ſterling, one half of this in bullion, the other half

in manufactures, metals, &c. this ſum inveſted there in India piece-goods, drugs, &c. with China manufactures and teas, produces at the company's ſales in England a ſum greatly above *double* the amount of the firſt export; that is to ſay, above 3,000,000 *l.* The buyers at theſe ſales vend we may ſuppoſe about one half in London, for the conſumption of the three kingdoms; the other half, amounting to 1,500,000 *l.* or the whole of the company's firſt coſt, is exported to other countries; which, after paying freight to theſe countries, with other charges, and a proper premium to the adventurer, muſt be imagined to be returned to England, increaſed to at leaſt 2,000,000 *l.* Now the bullion part of theſe returns does much more than replace the whole amount of the company's original export in that article; and the balance is made up in commodities, for which Britain muſt otherwiſe, at leaſt for the greateſt part of them, pay bullion. Thus by this trade England gets rid every year of a quantity of her manufactures, to the amount of 750,000 *l.* ſterling, to countries which, but for it, would not take off one pound's worth. Her trade in theſe *Indian* commodities to other countries is exceedingly great and beneficial; and theſe two branches of this trade employing a number of her ſubjects, doth greatly extend

her

her commerce. And let us not overlook the firſt half, ſaid to be conſumed in the three kingdoms, which I am aware ſome will ſay can be of no benefit to the nation, as being in itſelf ſuperfluous, unneceſſary, and what we could very well do without. I ſhall reply, that ſuch an argument is a very odd one in the mouths of a people, who draw ſuch immenſe ſums from other nations, for the ſelf-ſame and other ſuperfluities. It is true, we might do without theſe articles; Europe ſubſiſted long without an intercourſe with India, but now it is opened, we find that all our neighbour nations, even ſuch as are excluded from a direct commerce with it, do make a great uſe of its commodities; and can any one imagine that England, ſuppoſing ſhe were alſo to be excluded from this direct commerce, could be brought, on ſuch account, to deny herſelf the uſe of what ſhe has been now ſo long accuſtomed to, while ſhe could be ſupplied by her neighbours the French and Dutch? No ſurely, theſe neighbours would draw from her every year in ſpecie, for her own conſumption, a ſum equal to the whole of what our company at preſent exports, poſſibly much more, as an unrivalled monopoly would no doubt induce them to raiſe their prices on us. Such an excluſion to England muſt alſo throw

into the hands of thefe rivals, that grand branch of Englifh commerce in thefe commodities, to other parts of Europe, to Africa, and to America; for we are not to fuppofe that thofe whom we at prefent fupply would leave off the ufe of them, for this fole reafon, that England could no longer furnifh them.—As an occafional enhancement of the value of this Eaft-India trade, I might mention the fums annually remitted from thofe countries to England by her adventurous fons; the fortunes acquired there by all fuch as go out, and they feldom carry much with them, do, whether they die there, or live to come home, contribute a mite to the acceffion of her wealth. Nor will this feem altogether fo contemptible, when I affert that the fums remitted by fuch from one particular fettlement alone, amounted in one year to near two millions fterling, befides the immenfe fums received there that fame year by the company, in the way of donations; and although thefe did not arrive here in fpecie, yet every one knows how to transfer fuch fums paid into the company's cafh in India, to the account of their export of bullion in Europe. By this time it may be unneceffary to call in for the fupport of my argument the example of other European nations, who have expreffed their fenfe of the value of this

commerce by the moſt ſtrenuous endeavours to come at a ſhare of it. Nations which never were traders before have commenced ſuch, to have a part in this trade, and thoſe who have once taſted the ſweets of it, have always uſed their utmoſt efforts to preſerve and extend it. We have ſeen *Europe* in a blaze through the ſtruggles made to obtain a ſhare in this commerce, by thoſe who through tardineſs had been excluded, and the determined reſolution of the others to preſerve what they had acquired.

But though, as I before obſerved, this mighty branch of *Britiſh* commerce hath been repreſented by me greatly below its real and true value; yet, if it is but equal, what a dreadful amputation muſt the loſs of it be? Such a diminution too of our trade and wealth, becoming an addition to that of an already dreaded neighbour, muſt appear not only dangerous to, but deſtructive of the power, ſafety, and independence of this kingdom. If theſe intereſting points therefore are thus liable to be affected by the conduct of this company, how watchful ought we to be over it, how careful that it does not abuſe the truſt repoſed in it by the nation? And indeed, when we come to conſider the nature and conſtitution of this company, and how it is compoſed; if we alſo enquire into the number and quality

lity of the perſons to whom it deputeth its authority, together with the characters, capacities, and acquired light of thoſe who have been intruſted with the charge of their weighty affairs in India, it will appear to be almoſt time to look about us, and ſee whether we may reſt ſecure on their good management.

The proprietors of this company's ſtock are numerous, conſiſting of men, women, and children, foreigners as well as natives. This ſtock being alſo transferable like other public funds, is frequently ſhifting in the hands of ſuch as know no more of the company's affairs, than any of the temporary ſtockholders know of the tranſactions at the Cockpit: The whole ſecret reſts in the breaſts of a few, a very few individuals, who have an intereſt in concealing it; therefore thoſe who imagine that the nation is ſecured againſt any miſconduct of the company, by the interpoſition of the numerous proprietors, will find themſelves woefully miſtaken. As an inſtance of the ignorance in which this fluctuating body is kept by its managers, I ſhall only mention, that ſome years ago a general court having been demanded by a few of the proprietors, it was then required by theſe, that in order to ſatisfy them of the real ſtate of their affairs, the books of the company

ſhould be produced and ſhewn; but they were given to underſtand by the directors, that it was not for the intereſt of the company that their books ſhould be expoſed to public view; for that it would make certain people too wiſe. The majority of the court not inſiſting on it, the thing was dropped, and they remained in the dark. As the ſtock is ſaleable, no man needs retain it longer than he pleaſes; if he is diſſatisfied with the conduct of the company, he has his redreſs by ſelling out his ſhare: Thus he is intereſted in their welfare only from day to day. Five hundred pounds in ſtock give the owner a title to vote in a general court; 2000 l. qualifies him to be choſen a director. The charge of their affairs is entruſted to 24 directors, including the chairman and deputy chairman. Of the proprietors, few are qualified by ſtock for the place of director. Of thoſe who are qualified, few chooſe to confine themſelves to the neceſſary attendance: Therefore, till laſt year, diſputes for this place were but rare. Amongſt the candidates there is generally one, who, by dint of drudgery and application to the buſineſs of the India houſe, the principal quality hitherto poſſeſſed by or requiſite to any of them, has rendered himſelf neceſſary in the direction. This perſon takes upon him to form a liſt

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of ſuch directors for the enſuing year as are agreeable to him, copies of which liſt are uſually delivered out beforehand to his own friends, but to others they are diſtributed at the door of the houſe when the proprietors aſſemble to vote. If the proprietor receiving this liſt diſlikes any one or more names, he ſcratches ſuch out, and inſerting others, delivers it in as his liſt. If, as laſt year, there be ſeveral liſts, he takes that of his friend. When all are delivered in, the different liſts are ſcrutinized, and the majority declared. Thus there is always in the liſt a leader; and though there may be ſome ſcratches, yet has it been ſeldom, if ever known, that he failed of even one member of his liſt; and, as a noble candidate expreſſed himſelf at the laſt year's election, this leader will always, if not very hard puſhed, take care not to introduce any with him that ſhall diſpute his authority; at the worſt, he will be ſure to bring in ſuch as will, upon any occaſion, form a majority for him. Hence it appears that the power of the company, though veſted in 24 names, doth notwithſtanding reſt in one perſon, who, when he is placed in his chair, is ſuppoſed to be the mouth of this company. Sitting at the helm, he directs their affairs with unlimited authority; he raiſeth up, and he putteth down. In this manner are their affairs con-

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ducted in Europe. As to their ſervants in India, who are the executors of their orders, and more immediately upon the ſcene of action, they are, except a very few inſtances, compoſed of young gentlemen, taken immediately from ſchool to be ſent there; for as theſe ſervants there have generally till of late riſen in rotation and ſtanding, the parents or friends of ſuch gentlemen don't chooſe they ſhould loſe any time. Going abroad therefore thus young, before their education and underſtanding are well formed, into a country where jollity and good fellowſhip reign in a very high degree, it is but ſeldom that they improve by ſtudy what they acquired at ſchool: It is even much if they preſerve it. Thus we cannot expect to find among them many men of deep or improved underſtanding; it is true indeed we have ſeen among them a CLIVE, but he was a *rara avis*; Nature had done wonders in him. It may perhaps be replied here, that the government of the company's affairs is on the ſame footing as it always has been, and that the gentlemen at preſent in that truſt are equal in abilities and ſkill to thoſe who have conducted their buſineſs with acknowledged addreſs and ſucceſs from the commencement of the company till this preſent time; and that, if matters have hitherto gone well,

what

what reaſon have we to alarm ourſelves with unneceſſary fears for the future? To this I anſwer, that if the affairs of the company were on the ſame footing at preſent as they had remained from ſuch commencement till a few years ago, the gentlemen now in truſt might be, no doubt, quite equal to ſuch charge. While the buſineſs of directors in Europe was only to anſwer letters of commerce, to load ſhips with their indented cargoes, and to vend the returns, an ordinary genius, with a little application, might very well diſcharge the taſk. Nor were extraordinary talents requiſite to their ſervants in India, as living like merchants under the protection of the prince in whoſe dominions they reſided, to barter a little broad cloth, ſilver, lead, iron, ſteel, *&c.* for piece-goods of certain fabricks, or for other commodities wanted in Europe: While this remained the ſole buſineſs of the company in India, matters went very well, Fair trade being in theſe times the only path to riches, their ſervants there were induced to apply to and ſtudy it; and as fortunes are by means of it but ſlowly and gradually acquired, the riſe to truſt in that employ was in conſequence but ſlow and gradual. Rarely did any man in thoſe days reach the dignity of counſellor, till after a faithful ſervice of the company for twenty years; and

in that ſtation he generally, barring death, continued ſatisfied for ten or twelve years longer. Thus were they till of late ſerved in theſe countries by a ſet of gentlemen mature in years, and maſters of their buſineſs, who were aided in the execution of their orders from Europe by inferiors, whom experience had rendered fit for it. Of late years new lights have been ſtruck out, new roads to wealth; the old ſlow, though ſure tract of trade, hath fallen into univerſal contempt; mighty fortunes have been acquired by one ſtroke, and as ſoon as acquired, the field of India appearing too confined for the diſplay of ſuch opulence, the poſſeſſors have changed it for the more elegant ſcene of Europe. Thus hath there been, by ſuch a change of meaſures, a quick riſe, and conſequently a quick ſhift of ſervants in India. And whether ſuch an alteration in the nature of their ſervice may prove for the intereſt of their affairs there, will appear to ſuch as are acquainted with trade. But this is but a very ſmall part of the evil; for if the want of years and experience in their preſent ſervants may be ſuppoſed to render them leſs fit to diſcharge even the truſt of the oldeſt, how can we imagine them equal to the new, additional, weighty charge of governing kingdoms and nations? Trade, which formerly was the ſole,

fole, is now become but a fecondary concern of little moment. Commerce is greatly below the dignity and notice of fovereigns, and fuch are now the company's governors in India. Admiral Bofcawen, who was difpatched by the nation in the former war with a force to attack Pondicherry, on his arrival in India in 1748, found that the fervants of the company had fo little interefted themfelves in matters out of their fphere, that they were entirely ignorant of what was done fix or feven miles without the walls of their factory; for at that diftance he found his march ftopt by a French fort, of which none of them had ever heard before. The national war was foon after this extinguifhed there, but the evil effect of fuch extenfion of it to India did and does ftill remain. Happy had it been for this company, happy for the nation, that the neutrality offered by the French for that part of the world had been accepted by us! In fuch cafe commerce had ftill been at this day the fole bufinefs of Englifhmen in India. But here let me do juftice to the company, and obviate the odium which a ftep fo imprudent in merchants may otherwife throw upon it. On that occafion the directors were not allowed the choice, a pofitive order from higher powers obliged them, though moft reluc-

tantly, not only to reject, but to appear themſelves the rejectors of the proffered neutrality. What the ſuperficial and temporary views of this noble ſtateſman, who hath now waſhed off all his ſpots and blemiſhes by one plunge in the all-cleanſing pool of patriotiſm, might have been, I cannot tell; the conſequences, big with innumerable miſchiefs have ſhewn that they could not be ſolidly good, and that he hath "opened "a gate which mortal powers cannot ſhut "again." I muſt beg pardon for this digreſſion, which yet being of ſuch importance to my ſubject, poſſibly may not appear altogether improper. Immediately after the concluſion of this war, theſe gentlemen, whom I mentioned to have till then ſo little intereſted themſelves in affairs without, now began to extend their views. The governors for the French and Engliſh Eaſt-India companies on the coaſt of Coromandel, finding a body of European troops at their command and diſpoſal, perceived that this put it in their power to acquire an influence among the unwarlike natives. With this view they began to interfere in the political government of thoſe countries, in which they had till then peaceably traded. They ſtirred up competitors to form pretenſions, and each ſupported his claimant with the whole force of his conſtituents. All the

while

while that the mother nations were at peace in Europe, thefe rival governors were carrying on a very active war againft one another in India, to the deftruction of trade, and the mifery and ruin of the wretched natives; nor did this war end, till the demolition of the French capital left the Englifh, lords paramount of that whole country, the princes of which depend on them for their power, and fometimes even for their fubfiftance.

Again, in Bengal the Nabob Sou Rajah Dowlat having in 1756, whether with or without reafon is unneceffary here to mention, attacked the Englifh, and driven them from the fhore, they returned, and by force of arms deprived him of his government and life, fubftituting in his ftead the man who had been chiefly inftrumental in their fuccefs. He in return for their favours did, befides diftributing amongft them all the treafure of his predeceffor, and mortgaging and making over to them two of his richeft provinces for the payment of a farther fum, increafe the company's territory there, by the acceffion of large tracts of land. But he himfelf, with his whole country, was under their power and protection. This Nabob was fupported with honour by his maker, fo long as he continued in India; but on his leaving it, the fucceffors of this

great man finding that his Nabob was guilty of either the real or pretended crime of being poor, or in other words, that he either could not, or would not bleed any more, they changed him for one that was willing to pay them for his promotion; and to procure the company's approbation of their conduct, got from their Nabob a (I am afraid only temporary) grant of an additional district; so that their landed revenue in this country is now estimated at 700,000 l. sterling *per annum*. Let me observe that though this be the proper place for enlarging and being more particular in the account of these transactions, yet as such an account might possibly appear invidious, and calculated to raise, by shewing misconducts, a prejudice against this company, I shall confine myself both now and in the sequel, to a bare recital of such facts as are absolutely necessary to give a light into the present state of their affairs; my intention being not to search for and discover past faults, but by representing things as they really are, to endeavour to remedy present, and to prevent future evils, which by concealing may become incurable. What I have said therefore, is only meant to shew the means by which this company has been changed, contrary to the intention of its institution, from a commercial, into a military corporation; from a body of mer-

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chants peaceably trading in the dominions, and under the protection of princes, into ſovereigns of thoſe very princes, whom, with their great and opulent countries, they hold in more abſolute vaſſalage, than ever did monarch of France the meaneſt of his feudatories. It is alſo itſelf become proprietor of large tracts of lands, populous and rich, from which it draws kingly revenues; it maintains its power by great and expenſive armies; it has alſo grand and noble fortreſſes, ſtrong and capable of great defence. But we may form a general idea of the power and greatneſs of this mighty company, by conſidering, that beſides its revenue in India, ariſing from lands, duties, contributions of princes, *&c.* to the amount of above one million and a half ſterling *per annum*, the expence of its government there, demands almoſt the whole profits of its trade, or beyond one million more; for notwithſtanding this vaſt acceſſion of wealth, thiey divide but as formerly 6 *per cent.* on the ſtock. And here let the reader advert, that the direction of this widely extended government, the appropriation of theſe mighty finances, equal to near half the revenue of Great Britain, is confided to only one not extraordinary great man, with ſuch aids as have been already particulariſed. —This power and dominion of a trading company ſounds extremely grand, and it muſt

muſt no doubt excite pleaſure in every Engliſh breaſt, to think that not only the name, but the puiſſance of his country, has been in this glorious degree extended to the fartheſt corners of the earth, by its merchants. But let not this glaring ſhow of grandeur dazzle the eye of their underſtanding, *latet anguis in herba*. Let not ſhadow engage them to forego the ſubſtance; when they come to reflect on what they pay for all this pageantry, they will ſurely think it too dearly bought. By removing the object from this falſe and deceitful, to its true and real light, we ſhall find, that as this company acts only in truſt for the nation, every unneceſſary increaſe of her expence is a certain diminution of the wealth of the kingdom: It will alſo appear that this enormous extenſion of her political power and connections in India is dangerous to, and in time, if not prevented by the nation, will prove deſtructive of the very being and exiſtence of that trade, the importance of which was the ſubject of my introduction, and to the root of which the ax ſeems to be already laid. To illuſtrate and demonſtrate the firſt part of this aſſertion, I ſhall make uſe of a double theorem. In the firſt, rejecting and ſetting aſide theſe new, accidental, temporary, and uncertain revenues in India, and ſuppoſing that the

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whole expence of their government is defrayed by the profits arifing from their trade, it muft follow, that the higher their expences rife, the higher muft they raife the price of their commodities in Europe; and that the higher fuch price is, the larger will be the fum paid by the nation to the company for that part which fhe confumes at home, and the fmaller will be the gain on that part which fhe exports to other countries; feeing that the merchant exporting muft put up with a fmaller profit on his goods, than if he bought them cheaper; for it muft be obferved, that although this company are the fole venders of thefe commodities in England, yet the Englifh are not the fole merchants of them in Europe, in Africa, nor even in America. It muft be then granted that the price of Eaft-India goods will always be regulated by the expence of that company, and that the cheaper fuch goods are fold in England, the greater benefit arifes to the nation from this trade, and fo *vice verfa*. On this principle it would be evidently more for the intereft of this kingdom, if they could carry on their trade in India by pedlars living in huts and hovels, on the cheapeft fare, than by mighty governors, dwelling in palaces, and at the head of numerous armies; becaufe fo much expence as they fave in India, fo much doth the

the nation ſave in her expence for Eaſt-Indian commodities, and ſo much more clear gain doth ſhe receive from thoſe countries to which ſhe trades in thoſe goods. In this caſe, and almoſt in this alone, I may ſay that the intereſt of the company, or rather of its managers, appears to be diſtinct from, not to ſay oppoſite to that of the nation; and this ſeems to be the greateſt, and almoſt the only grievance ariſing from the being of ſuch a company, inaſmuch as by virtue of the excluſive charter, the directors are put into the power of obliging the nation to reimburſe them whatever expence they may chuſe by any ſchemes to run themſelves into; and alſo to extort from her, without her choice, a concurrence in all their meaſures, whether right or wrong. The ſenſe of the nation being thus liable to be arbitrarily taxed by one man, much under the degree of a firſt lord of the Treaſury, or of a ſecretary of ſtate, cannot miſs of raiſing diſdain in the minds of a people ever fond of liberty. By the ſecond part of my propoſition I ſhall ſhew that every unneceſſary expence of even the company's revenues in India is alſo a diminution of the wealth of this kingdom. This will no doubt appear ſomething extraordinary to the company, who do not look upon themſelves as at all accountable for the manner of diſpoſing of that,

that, which they will ſay is their own property, acquired at their own expence, and by the ſucceſs of their arms.

I ſhall only *en paſſant* take notice, that theſe acquiſitions were not made at their expence alone, but alſo at that of the nation, without whoſe interpoſition with her fleets and armies, even in their broils with the country powers, they would, inſtead of their preſent puiſſance and wealth, not have poſſeſſed a ſingle ſpot of ground in theſe countries. But waving this anecdote as not needed, I ſay that as all deficiencies of this revenue towards the expence of their government muſt be ſupplied from their trade, or, in conſequence of what I proved in my former theorem, muſt be levied on, and ſupplied by the nation; therefore whatever unneceſſary expence of their revenue may be made by the company, or its managers, the burthen of ſuch expence muſt in the end fall upon the good people of England. Farther, ſuppoſing that theſe revenues could with good management do more than ſupport the whole neceſſary expence of their government, and that there might be a ſaving; it is evident that ſuch ſaving muſt, altho' through the channel of this company, become an acceſſion to the wealth of the nation. I have on this occaſion confined myſelf as much as the ſub-

ject would permit me, but hope that I have made good what I propofed, and that it now appears that the company can have no property diftinct from the nation, and alfo that they are refponfible to her for the difpofal of what they call their own finances.

I have likewife advanced, that the enormous extenfion of the company's political power and connection in India, was dangerous to and in time will prove deftructive of that trade. If we argue from general, though juft maxims, it may be faid, that the ruin of all empires and governments hath arifen from an enlargement of the fuperftructure beyond what the bafis could bear. And that the company can affume or acquire no power but by depriving fome one of that power, who it may be prefumed, however awed at prefent into filence, will not part with his poffeffion without reluctance, and who when freed from the impending awe, will not mifs any opportunity of recovering his own, as well as of avenging the injury on the head of the ufurper. Such ufurpation of other peoples right, muft likewife ftir up the envy of our neighbours, who were formerly upon a good footing with us; our example will induce them to make ufe of the fame means to difpoil us, which we made ufe of to difpoil others. Thefe rules will ferve and ftand good in all cafes. In this

now before us let us examine into the particular danger, to which we may be expofed in our feveral fettlements in India; and firft in Bengal, which defervedly claims the preference, as being infinitely more valuable than all the others, of which it may be called the parent; and of which if ever we happen to be deprived, we have little more bufinefs in India: And here there are three different quarters, from which we have reafon to apprehend danger, firft from the natives themfelves, next from our European brethren, and laftly, which is the moft dangerous, from both united. As to the natives themfelves, we are taught to entertain the moft contemptible opinion of them, as of a weak, effeminate, daftardly people: the great fuccefs of colonel now lord Clive, who with a mere handful of men defeated the whole power of that country, and almoft changed the face of their government, hath conveyed to us the meaneft ideas of the military force of that part of the world. But it is dangerous to form our judgment of even fmall matters, upon one or two particular incidents, without informing ourfelves of circumftances. To enforce this I fhall produce an example from our own hiftory, in the reign of king John; fuppofing that it had been reported to a people equally unacquainted with the real

ſtrength of England, as the generality of my countrymen are with that of Bengal, that Lewis dauphin of France landing in this iſland with a very ſmall body of troops, had rendered himſelf maſter of the metropolis, and almoſt of the whole kingdom, obliging the monarch to ſeek for ſecurity on the even then contemned protection of the ſee of Rome, to which he ſurrendered his crown. I ſay, this reported without other circumſtances to a people uninformed, would naturally impreſs on them as contemptible tho' as falſe a notion of the power of England, as the exploits of colonel Clive do give us of that of Bengal; that we may not therefore be miſled in this caſe, let us examine into it with all its circumſtances. When colonel Clive attacked and defeated the Sou Rajah Dowlat, the natives had never before even ſeen a European force in the field; their large armies, maintained for parade, had never ſerved but to repel the light incurſions of their equally unwarlike neighbours. The then prince was hated and dreaded by all his ſubjects, more particularly by ſuch as were neareſt his perſon, they being continually ſubjected to the groſſeſt inſults, and even in apprehenſion of their lives, to ſecure which they were ready to join the firſt enemy that ſhould appear. Now what could be more opportune for ſuch a

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purpofe, than this body of Englifh, a people they had ever looked upon as peaceable merchants, and who they imagined had returned only to refettle that commerce, from which they had been expelled by their tyrant? Thus colonel Clive might find it no difficult matter to form a party againft this prince in his own court and army; this he did, and with a moft confummate addrefs reaped all the advantages from it that fuch a favourable circumftance could afford. The detefted Nabob being devoted to deftruction by thofe he trufted, fell an eafy conqueft, when by the counfel of his fecretly revolted minifters he came to an engagement; unluckily for him, his only faithful general was killed by a cannon ball in the very beginning of the action, and one half of his army either filed off towards the enemy, or fhewed that they had no intention to fight for him; while the other half, intimidated and fufpecting one another, difperfed almoft of themfelves. Thus the Nabob finding himfelf betrayed by thofe in whom he repofed the greateft confidence, fled, but being overtaken, was flain by the fon of him who was defigned to fill his place. That the Englifh did not only preferve but even extend their influence under the new Nabob, can be accounted for without afcribing it either to their own irrefifti-

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ble force, or to the pusillanimity of the natives. This Nabob raised by them to a government quite unsettled, had great occasion for the continuation of their aid, not only to confirm his power amongst his own subjects, but to repel the invasions which were soon made on his dominions from without. We ought not therefore to be surprized that the English interest, thus cherished by the prince of the country, did flourish under the conduct of colonel Clive, a person of quick penetration, profound judgment, and great resolution, whose genius seemed to be more particularly calculated for the meridian of those countries, where he was adored as a superior being, and where his very name was equal to numerous armies. Whilst this aid was thus necessary to the Nabob, no wonder he caressed his useful supporters; but when it became less so, even, he himself began to shew that he regretted the loss of what he had lavished away in the first transports of his gratitude, and that he would have been glad to reassume at least his independence. He was not unacquainted with the designs of the Dutch, and it is well known that he would not have been sorry to have seen an European force introduced into his dominions, which might prove a check on the power of those who he saw were likely to become

his maſters inſtead of his allies. However, the deep reſpect and awe he had of Col. CLIVE prevented his acting openly on this occaſion. The ſuperiority of this extraordinary genius predominated ſo far over that of the Nabob, that when he quitted India, he left this prince in ſuch a ſtate of dependence, and the affairs of the Engliſh in ſuch an exalted and powerful ſituation, that even the *Kites* and *Owls* that followed had it in their power to gorge themſelves with that prey, which being beat down, was at the mercy of, though ſpared by, this generous Eagle. They were enabled to ſubvert the conſtitution of that government, to the ſupport of which in the perſon of Meyer Jaffeir Alli Cawn, the faith of this nation, and of the Eaſt-India company, had been plighted by Admiral Watſon, Lord Clive, and the other gentlemen in higheſt truſt. Having thus, by aſcribing to their proper and true cauſes, accounted for the great conqueſts of Lord Clive, with the mighty influence which the Engliſh gained there under his auſpices, I ſhall next give a more juſt idea of the real ſtrength of this country, and what we we have to apprehend from it. As to what is called the ſinews of war, *Money*, we are well ſatisfied, that notwithſtanding the alienations made to the

Engliſh,

Engliſh, there is no want of that, the revenues of this Nabob's government alone being calculated at three millions and a half. He is alſo lord of all the property of this rich kingdom. Where money is, and alſo properly applied, men, and brave men (even if the country itſelf does not afford them) will never be wanting. The Pitans, a race of bold and hardy mountaineers to the northward of his dominions, do, Swiſs like, hire out their valiant ſons to war. Of theſe the Nabobs generally entertain a number in their pay, and it is not at all extraordinary for them to bring into the field 80,000 men. But why ſhould we entertain ſuch a mean opinion of his own troops? The Engliſh themſelves have and do now employ the natives of his countries in their ſervice; and they have experienced that they are far from being void of courage. We have beſides ſeen there inſtances in individuals of as high reſolution as others can boaſt of. The truth is, that this diſperſed valour has not hitherto been collected by diſcipline and military ſkill. That diſcipline which renders a ſmall party equal to the whole force of numerous nations, was never yet acquired by any people at once, or in the ſhort ſpace of one year.

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But this uſeful knowledge we have been communicating to them for eight years paſt, at the firſt undeſignedly; the armies of the Nabob marching for four or five years in conjunction with ours, could not miſs of receiving ſome impreſſions. Thoſe natives alſo, who, by being in our ſervice, have been inſtructed, trained, and exerciſed with the ſame art and care as our own troops, and who have likewiſe fought bravely on ſeveral occaſions, in our cauſe, and under our inſpection, are ſubjects of this ſame Nabob. And I find, that within theſe three years or more, we have been particularly induſtrious and attentive to marſhalling the army of our favourite Nabob, I mean, Caſſin Alli Can, and that he hath been ſupplied with Engliſh officers proper for that purpoſe. I am further informed, that the ſeapoys in our ſervice have been more than uſually frequent in demanding their diſcharges, which without heſitation has been granted them; and I ſcarcely think that they will leave their ſkill with their Engliſh muſkets, or that when entered into the ſervice of their prince, they will immediately return to their primitive rawneſs. The uſe of artillery, a ſcience in high perfection amongſt the Europeans, and ſo material in deciding battles, was alſo next to unknown by theſe natives, when colonel Clive came

amongſt them. Although they were not intirely ignorant of a ſort of conſtruction of guns, yet were they ſurprizingly rude and awkard in the uſe of them: but this alſo is to be learnt and acquired from proper teachers, and even if they have not gunners of their own, the Europeans ſettled amongſt them will be always able to ſupply them. Therefore we muſt expect to behold theſe natives, ſoon, if not already, a very different people from what Col. Clive found them.

And now let us ſee in what predicament we ſtand with theſe natives, the ſtrength and force of whom I have thus repreſented.— Ever ſince the Engliſh re-entered Bengal by force, the peace of that country has been continually and moſt thoroughly embroiled. Their bloody diſputes with Sou Raja Dowla, their attack of the French, their broils with the Dutch, the unaccountable protracted war with Sha Zadah, together with the more than uſually violent incurſions of the Morattoes, have rendered that kingdom a continued ſcene of war, where ever, till then (excepting at times, a light incurſion of theſe Morattoes made by them, in order to quicken the payment of their Choult) peace had reigned without interruption. And now they are engaged in troubles of a ſtill more bloody nature, and big with greatly more fatal conſequences;

the ſeeds of a civil war ſown by our hands alone, will produce a moſt plentiful harveſt of blood, ſlaughter, famine and deſtruction to theſe countries. Where the manufacturer, where the labourer uſed to riſe undiſturbed and unknowing of fear, there at preſent is heard nought but the ſound of the trumpet, and the dreadful alarms of war. That country, late ſo famous for commerce, whoſe rich manufactures brought to it immenſe wealth from every quarter of the tributary world, and whoſe fertile plains ſupplied millions of its neighbours with grain, is unable now to yield itſelf the bare neceſſaries of life. The loom is unemployed, neglected lies the plough; trade is at a ſtand, for there are no manufacturers to carry it on. The Engliſh capital, which muſt be ſuppoſed the laſt that would be affected by it, now feels the miſery of dearth, numbers periſhing there for want of food: What then muſt the wretched natives in other parts ſuffer? This account is not exaggerated, but founded on a letter, written by ſuch of the company's ſervants in India, as diſſented from the proceedings of their colleagues, to the directors in Europe. But even this, tho' heavy, is but a part of the miſery, that this harmleſs oppreſſed people have and do ſuffer more immediately from the Engliſh. They have

ſeen their fundamental laws and cuſtoms ſubverted, the perſons of their princes moſt groſſly inſulted, the whole frame of their government proſtituted to the lawleſs inſolent luſt of rapacious foreigners. The wantonneſs of power, veſted in even young raw boys, hath trampled on the dignity of their moſt reſpectable perſonages. In a government thus unhinged, thus harraſſed, what muſt the unhappy ſubjects feel; without protection, without order, nothing prevailing but anarchy, confuſion and deſpair? Can we ſuppoſe theſe ſufferers men, can we look upon them as rational beings, and at the ſame time believe that they entertain no reſentment againſt the authors of this accumulated war and miſery; againſt the changers of their quiet and tranquil ſtate, into the preſent wretched and truly deplorable condition? And can a nation bleſt themſelves, and truly ſenſible of the happineſs of a regular and well eſtabliſhed government, remain inſenſible to the inexpreſſible anguiſh of their fellow-creatures? — But in what light muſt their preſent and future princes regard us? Meer Jaffeir Alli Cawn, the firſt Nabob made by us, could not help looking on us with an evil eye. Having, as I had occaſion to mention before, been veſted by us in a government to which he otherwiſe had no pretenſion, he had improvidently

given

given away, what, when cool, he could not help regretting the loſs of: beſides his grants of money and lands, he had parted with the ſplendour and independence of his predeceſſors; and notwithſtanding his Maker did ſupport him in theſe points as much as circumſtances would permit, yet could not he prevent this poor prince from being obliged to ſwallow many a bitter pill. After the departure of Colonel Clive, the delicacy that he had uſed towards him was entirely thrown aſide. His ſucceſſor in the government, who had been particularly inſtrumental in bringing down Sou Rajah Dowla, and conſequently in occaſioning the firſt revolution in Bengal, had arrived at his new dignity contrary to the intention of his conſtituents, and entirely through the accident of a number of his ſeniors going home at this time in diſguſt. Being bleſt with a genius uncommonly fertile in expedients for raiſing money, and further unclogged by thoſe ſilly notions of punctilio, which often ſtand in the way betwixt ſome people and fortune, he had projected and put in practice ſeveral inferior manœuvres; but this *Chef d'Oeuvre*, this maſter ſcheme, though formed almoſt as ſoon as he came to power, time did not allow him to have the honour of executing. Being formed however, we may imagine, that under ſuch a governor, daily mortifications,

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tions, and in various ſhapes, were not wanting to this ill-ſtarred Nabob. The prince who depends on the will of a ſuperior, ungenerous and incapable of humane or delicate ſentiments, is in a more mean and wretched ſtate, than he who depends on a common proſtitute for his daily food. Our Nabob quickly found himſelf reduced to leſs than the name of prince, inſulted by the moſt contemptuous ſlights of thoſe whom he called his allies, and who, to pave the way to the projected change, embroiled his affairs, and uſed all other means in their power to render him odious; deſpiſed, reviled, and curſed even to his face by his own ſubjects, who laid to his charge all the miſeries they ſuffered by war, all the hardſhips and injuries to which they had been ſubjected by foreigners, into whoſe hands he had reſigned the ſubſtance, on condition he might enjoy the ſhadow of government; his very domeſticks treated him with contempt and neglect. His ſon, who had acted as his general, was ſuddenly taken from him. This active young prince in the midſt of his own, and the Engliſh camp, was moſt ſingularly ſtruck by lightening. About four months after the departure of colonel Clive, a gentleman from Madraſs arrived at Calcutta, to take upon him, by order of the directors, the government of their affairs in Bengal. It

muſt here again be acknowledged, that the gentlemen in the direction, ſhowed they had ſo little intention, that the accidental governor ſhould have ever come to that truſt, that they now removed him to be the ſeventh in council. Being endued however in a very high degree with what in ſome is called addreſs, enforced by a great ſhare of plauſibility in argument, he found theſe talents of ſingular uſe to him on this occaſion. His grand plan being now almoſt ripe for execution, could not be concealed from his ſucceſſor. He wavered ſome days about continuing in the ſervice of his maſters in that degraded rank. During this ſpace it may be imagined, that he was employed in uſing his influence to prevail on the new governor, who was a ſtranger there, to adopt his views. At laſt this perſon, who had been hitherto but ſlightly eſteemed by his ſucceſſor, was by him taken into the moſt intimate favour and confidence, and admitted into the ſecret committee, which is compoſed of a few ſelect members of the council there. This was but a bad omen for the unfortunate Nabob, as from this very ſymptom we may conclude, that the ſcheme and meaſures of the former, were now embraced by the preſent governor. But it does not redound much to the honour of this degraded governor, nor plead greatly in favour of the diſ-

intereſtedneſs

interestedness of his views, that after such a stigma, such a mark put upon him by his superiors, he could, (though during his short government he had acquired a handsome fortune) submit to serve them in the seventh place, after having been in the first. However, he had the spirit to remain in it no longer, than till he had fairly packed off the then governor on the execution of his plan, and on that very day he resigned. I should not have dwelt so particularly on these seemingly trifling incidents, nor should I have descended so low, as to touch individuals, had not I found it absolutely necessary towards drawing one material inference, which is, that this scheme of Nabob changing, borrows no lustre from the character of its original projector. We may thence imagine, that this much injured prince remained in little better circumstances than those we mentioned, from the time of the arrival of the new governor, till that of the catastrophe of the piece, his deposition, the circumstances of which, though extremely affecting, are yet too tedious and unnecessary to my purpose to be repeated here, suffice it then to say, that the action itself was executed in a " clandestine and treacherous" manner. The persons concerned in this transaction have taken upon them to give some reasons for their conduct, but besides that

moſt of theſe are ſaid to be falſe, there is not one of them can carry any weight with an unprejudiced and tolerably informed examiner. For not to enter into particulars, this prince was independent of the Engliſh, having been acknowledged as ſuch in the moſt formal manner by thoſe very Engliſh, who had alſo in their treaties with him ſolemnly engaged to ſupport him with their whole power againſt all his enemies. How could they then who had thus ſworn, and who had not the ſmalleſt pretext of authority, ſaving that of preſent force, to call him to any account for his actions, preſume, in violation of theſe oaths, to deprive him of his dignity, and to beſtow it on another? The only ſhadow of excuſe given is, that it was for the intereſt of their maſters, and whether it was really ſo or not, time will ſhow; but whatever weight this argument may have with the company, it can have but little with the reſt of mankind, who will ſcarcely admit, that a preſent view of advantage, can abſolve from the bond of oaths and treaties. And it will be found very difficult to perſuade any man of common diſcernment, that even this wretched excuſe of the company's intereſt was their motive to that ſhameful ſtep. By the letter which I have before-mentioned, theſe depoſers acknowledge the promiſe of twenty

lacks of rupees (240,000 l. ſterling) as a gratuity for their trouble in this arduous affair. But this is not the only honourable feat that we have performed on this occaſion; we have delivered up to this well-paying Nabob, all ſuch of the natives as had adhered to the Engliſh intereſt, and had been ſo remarkably ſerviceable to Col. Clive. Theſe, one would imagine, merited our protection; but inſtead of it they were all, and among them the Nabob of Patna thrown into the ſcale, and immediately on being delivered, were by this our faithful ally put to the torture, that they might diſcover their treaſure, and after that, for the crime of attachment to the Engliſh, put to a cruel death. Theſe were the chief exploits of this nature that we had the power of performing, and ſuch baſeneſs, muſt, without doubt, render the faith of the Engliſh nation, as reſpectable in theſe countries, as was the *punica fides* amongſt the Romans. What truſt, what confidence can theſe people, or any of their future princes repoſe, in ſuch as make ſo light of honour and oaths. But this our friend, this purchaſer of his father-in-law's right, hath ſhown at leaſt his judgment in his opinion of us, for ſoon after his promotion, he quitted the capital of his country, where his predeceſſors had ever reſided, removing to the moſt northern part of his dominions,

minions, as being the moſt diſtant from his dangerous friends, wiſely concluding, that whilſt he remained within their reach, his dignity was no longer ſecure, than till a proper perſon was found to bid for it. He then iſſued forth orders for all his ſubjects to quit the ſouthern parts of the country, and ſoon after began to interrupt and ſtop our commerce. At laſt, in a very proper ſeaſon of the year he commenced hoſtilities, by ſeiſing our factories, and murdering even the ambaſſadors who had been ſent to treat with him; whoſe perſons have ever been ſacred amongſt the moſt barbarous nations. But what faith is to be obſerved with a people, who are themſelves void of it? And now we are thoroughly engaged in a war with him; from which, at preſent, we have this chance of extricating ourſelves; that as he was an uſurper, and unpleaſing to many of thoſe whom we ourſelves obliged to be his ſubjects, the depoſed Nabob, whom we have now again acknowledged, may poſſibly be able to form a party in his favour. If we act unanimouſly, if we are vigorous, and aſſemble all the force that can be collected, and ſtrike a quick and ſudden blow, the war may be at once quaſhed for this time. But if by disjointed counſels it be protracted, till the other Europeans ſettled there, can draw together a force to join our

ufurping Nabob, it is moft probable, that on this occafion we fhall receive our *Coup de Grace*. In the mean time, thefe countries are ufelefs to us, trade and agriculture being entirely ftopped, what revenues can we draw from them, or what profit on commerce? We fhall this year have a few goods: three fhips difpatched from thence laft year loft their paffage and put back, their cargoes will arrive this year. But excepting thefe, and the few goods which may have been provided before the open rupture, where are we to look for more, until matters are fettled, a probably very diftant profpect? But whatever iffue this prefent war may have, we may fee what the force of the country, united under an active prince, with fober counfels, and a tolerable adminiftration of the finances is capable of, even without the aid of any of the Europeans fettled there. And when that once becomes the cafe, we may alfo fee what we have reafon to expect from them.

But the Dutch are fettled in thefe countries as well as we; they have beheld with an invidious eye our mighty power, privileges and poffeffions there; to which they think we have no other right, than that of having been the firft who had the good fortune to grafp at it, and which title they imagine ought to ftand good no longer than till a

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ſuperior force can wreſt it from us. They lately made a moſt vigorous and well-deſigned effort to this end. The ſeaſon ſeemed alſo favourable; when we were overmatched on the coaſt of Coromondel, our capital there being then threatened, and ſoon after inveſted by the French: when the greateſt, and a choſen part of our troops had been detached from Calcutta on a neceſſary expedition to the coaſt of Golconda, while there remained behind little more than two hundred Europeans: at ſuch a ſeaſon arrived in the river of Bengal ſeven Dutch ſhips with ſix hundred Europeans, and a greater number of Indian ſoldiers on board. So far this plan ſeemed to be extremely well timed; but unluckily for them, the management of the Engliſh affairs was then in the hands of Colonel Clive, and whether it was owing to the ſuperior addreſs of our governor in fruſtrating this ſcheme; or whether it might be owing to the incapacity of the Dutch themſelves, or perhaps to both theſe cauſes, this promiſing and ſeemingly eaſy enterprize, was by them executed in a moſt bungling manner. Our penetrating chief ſaw at once into the end of their views, and alſo their pretence for bringing theſe troops into the river; he well knew the conſequence of admitting them into the heart of the country; and he as quickly

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formed his own plan of conduct. Though, far from receiving affiftance or even countenance from the Nabob, though inftead of being aided by the advice, he was harraffed by the fears and remonftrances of his counfellors, yet he remained firm and fteady, and fo ferene, that his courage at laft communicated itfelf to the dejected inhabitants. By the awe of his name he kept the Nabob from interpofing, or even declaring his inclinations, which he certainly would have done under any other governor lefs refpected by him. Fortunately alfo Colonel Ford, a gallant officer, having quitted his command at Maffulipatram, arrived at Calcutta to eafe our governor of fome part of his burthen; he, at the earneft entreaty of Colonel Clive, took upon him, though as a volunteer, the command of the few foldiers. On the difembarkation of the Dutch troops, he was fent up the river to prevent a junction of their garrifon with that corps; he foon met with and difperfed the garrifon, and next day attacked the other body fatigued with a long march; over which he gained a moft complete victory, and by it the Dutch factory, as they at that time humbly acknowledged, lay at his mercy. Thus was this attempt fruftrated by the extraordinary vigorous and prudent conduct of the then governor; I fay extraordinary, becaufe though

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the gentlemen in his council at that time, were equal to any of thoſe who have been, either before or ſince, or who are likely in future to be employed by this company; yet I appeal to thoſe very gentlemen, even now when the danger is over, whether they or any one of them would have preſumed, in the ſituation they were then in, to have even attempted what this nobleman ſo fortunately executed. Yet one of theſe, the moſt particularly clamorous at that time, hath ſince formed and carried into execution an enterprize which Colonel Clive would have ſhuddered to think of. But although we have reaſon to rejoice that our enemies were on this occaſion diſappointed, yet unleſs we retain there ſuch governors as he was, we cannot from hence conclude, that we ſhall always be as ſucceſsful. Our very neighbours too will grow wiſer by experience; their troops, on that occaſion, were thinly and badly officered; but we find they are reſolved to truſt no longer to the *Heeren Van Batavia*, ragamuffin coblers and tailors. They have now ſent out hardy veterans, ſuch as have ſeen blood in the Pruſſian and Auſtrian ſervices. Other circumſtances too are greatly changed in their favour; the Engliſh are at preſent fully employed in a war with at leaſt one, and he the moſt powerful of the two princes; who being in poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion of the country, at the head of an army of a different mould from theſe of the former Nabobs, has likewiſe ſhown by the ſteps he has taken, that he neither expects nor deſires peace with us. He will now remove all difficulties of introducing their troops into thoſe countries; and what even a ſmall body of Europeans joined to his army may do is needleſs to explain. As to the French they are out of the queſtion, as being ſuppoſed to have no force there; yet in this we may be deceived. Some will aver, that we ought to put confidence in the generoſity of our European brethren, who certainly will not take the advantage of our diſtreſſes, and that things may yet go well; I hope, however, we ſhall never be reduced to truſt to that, as we have already experienced the ſincerity of their friendſhip in theſe very countries. Yet how can we, ſhould they even do all this, accuſe them of acting ungenerouſly? In a country altogether independent of either us or them, two princes are in diſpute about the ſucceſſion, they each have an equal title, the grant and inveſtiture of the Engliſh, if we are at this preſent in the humour to think that our firſt choice gives a better right than our ſecond, they no doubt will imagine that they are at liberty to chuſe whether they ſhall think as we do or not; if they ſhould chance

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to differ from us, they will ſay that they ought in equity to be allowed to ſupport their opinion with the ſame arguments as we ſupport ours.—How the Dutch may act I cannot promiſe; but the French and Engliſh were accuſtomed in ſuch like diſputes to deal very genteely by each other. They uſed each to chooſe their ſide, neither as principals; they met in the field, under the banners of their diſtinct dependent; there they engaged, and ſlaughtered one another as much as they could, but ſtill in a friendly manner, becauſe there was peace betwixt the mother countries in Europe. Nay on this occaſion theſe our brethren can account for ſuch conduct, by arguments that muſt appear equitable even to ourſelves; for if we do thus through wantonneſs of power take upon us on every lucrative view to change the prince, and by this embroil the peace of the country where they are ſettled with the ſame right as we to trade, can we expect that for ſuch reaſon they are to loſe their commerce, and be obliged to put themſelves to the charge of maintaining expenſive factories, which through our means ſhall become uſeleſs? No (will they ſay) let the common diſturbers be ejected as foes to mankind and to the peace of ſociety; But as I obſerved before, this preſent war may by unanimity in counſel, by vi-

gorous meaſures, and a proper uſe of the other circumſtances in our favour, be quaſhed and happily ended. However, if that ſhould happen to be the caſe this time, yet while the cauſes remain, the effects will probably, nay inevitably be the ſame. But ſhould things take an adverſe turn, and we in conſequence be ejected from Bengal, let us not flatter ourſelves with the hopes of an eaſy return there, for this reaſon, that we have ſeen the French who had been expelled, ſo readily re-admitted into theſe countries. Circumſtances greatly alter the caſe betwixt us and the French. They were expelled from thence by the Engliſh in their proper character, during a national war; therefore they had to obtain the conſent of the Engliſh alone for their return. But ſhould the Engliſh be ejected, it will be not only with the concurrence, but in the name of the prince of the country, whoſe conſent we muſt have to come back; and what difficulties may occur in procuring that, contrary to the intereſt of other, no doubt then powerful and intriguing Europeans, will too evidently appear. In the caſe of the French, they had never acted in theſe countries but as merchants, the natives would therefore be far from ſorry to ſee ſuch come again amongſt them. But how the Engliſh have acted there has been deſcribed,

ſcribed, and let the lion's claws be pared ever ſo cloſe, there will ſtill be conſtant apprehenſions of their growing again. Then that mighty fort, which with a proper garriſon, with ammunition of war, proviſions, and tolerable conduct, bids defiance to all the powers of India, and to all the forces that can be tranſported from Europe to that part of the world, falling through a defect in all theſe points, into the hands of more provident enemies, will for ever forbid our return to thoſe countries without their leave, and on their own terms. As to our other ſettlements on the coaſt of Coromandel, *&c.* they are ſcarce worth mentioning after the other. However, if the French have an eye that way, there is the old field open, a competition for the Carnatic Nabobſhip.—They have no ſettlements there? Let them find but men, it is an open coaſt, there are many towns, their partizan will grant them a title to ſettlements, which will be equally as valid with them as our Nabob's can be with us; the longeſt ſword will decide the cauſe.

Before I proceed farther, let me obviate a prejudice which may be ſtarted in the minds of ſome of my readers, by the warmth I may have expreſſed in handling two oppoſite characters in the preceding narration. I mean the praiſe I have beſtowed on virtue,

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and the abhorrence of vice. Praiſe is at preſent ſo common, while at the ſame time merit is ſo rare, that the juſt ſubject of praiſe being next to loſt, the meaning of that term is likewiſe almoſt become extinct, or at leaſt ſynonymous with flattery. Yet where there is real merit, praiſe ſurely is the ſmalleſt tribute we can pay it. My ſubject will ſtand the teſt, a candid examination will not only free me from the imputation of flattery, but will even make it appear that I have rather beſtowed my encomiums with a ſcanty hand. As to the contraſt, who can blame me for pulling off the cloak of virtue from the foul and deformed body of vice? I have in the preceding part ſhewn the mighty value of this trade to England; as alſo the dreadful conſequences ariſing to her, from its becoming an addition to the commerce of her neighbours. I have likewiſe given the outlines of the nature of this company, and the capacities of thoſe who are entruſted with this important charge; and by a genuine and juſt account of the ſituation of affairs in Bengal, I have expoſed to view the grounds we may have to apprehend either a preſent or future loſs of that which is the only valuable ſettlement; and from which when thrown out, we may be for ever after moſt eaſily excluded. As to the fun-

fundamental principles and facts * on which I have argued, let who will difprove them; if no one, and indeed no one can, let my countrymen then ftand judges of the juftice of my conclufions; and if they are allowed by them to be juft, I doubt not but they will with me conclude, that a fubject of fo much confequence to this nation, being thus involved in difficulties, and in fuch imminent danger of being wrefted from our hands for ever, demands the care and fkill of more and abler heads than of thofe to whom they are entrufted, and who are fo far from having the power and capacity of extricating themfelves from their prefent embarrafment, that it is to be feared they will, by irrefolute and divided counfels, entangle their affairs to that degree, as to render it in time impoffible for even the power and wifdom of this kingdom to clear them. I fpeak not this with the view of expofing to contempt the weaknefs or inability of the company *in its accepted fenfe*; no! my defign is only to expofe what they felfifhly, and through a mean and falfe pride, have hitherto concealed. Power is naturally agreeable to all, we are all loth to declare our defects and failings; we are moft of us

* As to the conduct of particulars mentioned here, they are detached from and independent of the main fubject.

us ſo prejudiced in favour of our own abilities, that if we are capable of conducting an enterprize in any ſhape, we immediately think no one could have conducted it better. This accounts in ſome meaſure for what would otherwiſe be inexcuſeable in theſe gentlemen, who in juſtice to their country ought to have declared ſome time ago, that the mighty extent of their concerns, beyond what it was when they received their laſt charter, had rendered their powers as well as their ſtock greatly unequal to the charge. With reſpect to their own perſonal abilities, any mention of them would have been too mortifying a declaration to be expected from themſelves, yet would that have occurr'd as a very natural conſequent of the other; and one would be almoſt induced to ſuſpect that the fear of diſcovering that conſequence has ſo long ſmothered the former. It is evident that in order to preſerve the exiſtence of any *Being*, the means of its ſupport ought to be proportioned to its demands and natural wants. This nation therefore ought to be moſt particularly watchful over the growth of this company's concerns, and to be moſt minutely careful in proportioning every increaſe of ſuch weight and influence, to an increaſe of power and of ſtock, as alſo of the abilities and even *Rank* of ſuch

as are chofen to be intrufted with the conduct of this increafed charge; without fuch addition the thing muft droop, dwindle and die. When I mention an increafe of power, I ought not to be underftood as meaning an increafe of the power of the 24 directors, fuch as they are at prefent, and who are commonly underftood to mean the company; they have already more than they are capable of ufing properly. But let us not be fufpicioufly cautious of augmenting the power and privileges of this company, provided it is returned to and kept, as nearly as circumftances will permit, in the fpirit of its original inftitution; which inftitution I underftand to have have been as follows.

In the reign of queen Elizabeth, the merchants of England firft trading to the Eaft-Indies, were by that wife princefs incorporated and formed into a company, for this end and with this view, that the ftocks, counfels, and interefts of many being joined, that trade might by this united force, be driven to a greater extent, the loffes be more eafily fuftained and repaired, and the great confufion and other numberlefs difadvantages arifing from an oppofition and rivalfhip of many diftinct and feparate interefts be evaded and fhunned. For the farther encouragement and cherifhing this then infant trade and company, fhe likewife endowed it with

many

many privileges, and even with an exclusive right, which while this trade remained thus in its infancy and confined in point of stock, might be deemed a monopoly; but seeing it is now so immensely increased as to demand such a large stock to carry it on, if the word monopoly may be still preserved, it ought not in justice to be applied to the company *in its true sense*, seeing every man that pleases may be admitted into the stock: though at the same time, as we shall hereafter show, it may in another sense, still merit the title.

The princes who succeeded that great queen, together with the other branches of the legislature, so low down as William the third, were so sensible of the justness of these wise and well weighed reasons, which induced her to establish this trade on such a footing, that ever since, on the application of that company, they always most readily renewed their charter, and also as there was occasion increased their privileges. In the sense that I have here mentioned, the incorporation of this company may be termed a collecting and assembling of several different little springs and rills into one bed or channel, the bounds and banks of which are its exclusive charter. These several springs then, which if allowed to diffuse and disperse in their natural courses, would have lost themselves almost at their sources, being

now collected and confined in one bed, do thus form a mighty river rolling along, and with its torrent ſweeping all before it, as ſcorning the reſiſtance of ſmaller ſtops and lets. Therefore if the nation either increaſes its force or enlarges and widens its banks, ſhe only ſtrengthens thereby the work of her own hands. This metaphor I think may convey a pretty juſt idea of the light in which this company and its charter have been looked upon, by the princes and parliaments of this nation, ſo far down as the reign of William the third. But in that reign, we have reaſon to imagine that the nature and conſtitution of the company was changed, for we find that at this time, in order to the obtaining a renewal of their charter, they were obliged to make uſe of clandeſtine means, and to bribe very high, as to the ſhame of many then in power, was diſcovered by the great activity of the houſe of commons; and ever ſince, the renewal of their charter, hath met with great oppoſition, ſo as that at laſt in the year 1698, a charter was granted to a new company, on their undertaking to lend the government a larger ſum of money than the old one could pretend to do; yet, through certain means, the old one ſtill retained its charter; though it was afterwards found neceſſary to the good and even the exiſtence of each, that both

 ſhould

ſhould coaleſce and unite, and from this union they take the title of *United, &c.* It may be expected and even be worth the pains, that we ſhould account for and explain the manner of this alteration which we have mentioned, of the original nature and conſtitution of this company. Of this we ſhall give a curſory view, and no more than is abſolutely neceſſary to the preſent purpoſe. If it ſhould be found from theſe hints, that a more full account of theſe and other ſuch matters will be agreeable to any of my countrymen, I ſhall be ever ready to communicate any little light that I may have acquired of this intereſting ſubject. At the firſt inſtitution of this company it may be ſuppoſed, that the members or proprietors were but few, and thoſe merchants; who though they might depute ſome few of their own body, to attend to the more immediate diſpatch of the buſineſs of the joint concern, yet as being but few, and alſo merchants, every proprietor in ſuch character, would no doubt at a general meeting or court, avail himſelf of his privilege, to enquire into and make himſelf acquainted with the moſt private and ſecret tranſactions of the trade.

But when this trade became ſo extenſive, and required ſuch a ſum of money to carry it on, as obliged the nation to preſcribe limits to their ſtock, then alſo the proprietors be-

became very numerous, for none being refused, men, women, children, and foreigners of all nations were admitted. It is well known that in every branch of trade there are secrets, which are not proper to be communicated, seeing that such communication would be of particular prejudice to the skilful trader. In this mighty branch there are no doubt secrets, which, as many of the proprietors are foreigners, might in consequence of their being known by such, and their withdrawing their property from our to the Dutch or other East-India stocks, be by them made use of to the irreparable loss of our company. For this reason it became on such occasion necessary, that the secrets of the company should be withdrawn from the sight of the whole, and be confided only to a few who are their directors. Thus began to arise that mighty difference and alteration, from the original intent and constitution of this company. On the commencement of stock-jobbing the company amongst others also, lent our government, at three different times, to the amount of 4,200,000*l.* sterling, and by this means their stock and concerns have mightily increased; and besides the other evil consequences of this jobbing scheme, it has also so thoroughly thrown the affairs of the company into the hands of the directors, that they are now become almost

(even properly ſpeaking) themſelves the Eaſt-India company. This power and charge of truſt reſts in a body of about 50 or 60 perſonages of no very extraordinary abilities, who go in and out by rotation, or by a change of intereſts, for as I before obſerved 24 of theſe do for the time being form this direction. This will alſo account for what muſt otherwiſe appear an abſurdity, I mean the mighty ſtruggles made, and the large ſums of late expended for the grant of a new charter; for ſuppoſing the proprietors of the India ſtock to form the Eaſt-India company, what can be more abſurd than to think that this company would part with 200,000*l.* at a time, for that which to them does not value a ruſh? this may alſo be cleared up by the following obſervation, in which, however, if I am miſtaken, I ſhall ſubmit. When I (and I imagine my caſe is the ſame with that of others) chooſe to take 500 or 1000*l*, in this company's ſtock, I go to market, I give the current price for it, I have a tranſfer and thus become a proprietor; but this ſtock I do not buy for this reaſon, that it is more beneficial than any other ſtock, no; I have my 6 *per Cent.* for my 150*l.* or 4 *per Cent.* for my 100, at leaſt nearly in the ſame manner as the other funds; and for the matter of ſecurity, this ſtock is ſo much connected with, and dependent on the publick funds,

funds, that it is not only liable to all the riſks of any of them, but is alſo ſubject to its own particular dangers. My reaſons then for making myſelf a proprietor ariſe not from the views of ſuperior benefit on my money, but perhaps, becauſe I chooſe to have a compliment paid me once a year by the candidates for the direction, and poſſibly I may expect in return ſome ſmall favour for a young relation, *&c.* nay even whim may induce me. At any rate, in regard to my money, I look for my dividend at the ſtated times, while that's paid me I interfere not with ſecrets, which I can neither come at, nor do they at all import me as a proprietor, ſeeing if I am any ways apprehenſive, I can carry my concern again to market. If this is, and I am pretty clear it is nearly the caſe of all proprietors, ſaving the number of thoſe whom I excepted, is it to be imagined that they would part with a ſhilling, for the continuation of that from which they reap not one farthing extraordinary benefit? But taking the company in its other ſenſe, as compoſed of, or which is the ſame, implicitly guided by its directors; it may appear to be very well worth the while of theſe few gentlemen to pay a very large ſum for the continuation of their power and influence, ſeeing that a very ſmall part of the ſum comes out of their pockets; and that the fluctuating body of proprietors

reſt ſupine, and while they receive their expected dividend *care for none of thoſe things.* By reflecting, and conſidering what hath been ſaid, we ſhall alſo be able to diſcover another ſecret, which is, the deſpotick power acquired, and the cruel tyranny exerciſed by this ſmall company or directorial body, over that large unweildy pithleſs one, the proprietors, who being thus indifferent, without a head, divided, without concerted meaſures, counſel or rule, put it in the power of thoſe few to keep them in the moſt *cimmerian* darkneſs with reſpect to their own affairs. For if at any time a few of theſe proprietors ſhould impertinently preſume to pry into the abſtruſe myſteries of their own buſineſs, the dictators are ever ready with the dreadful fulmination of throwing up their charge; and the fear of that anarchy which muſt neceſſarily be the conſequence of ſuch a ſudden reſignation, will ever ſerve effectually to charm into ſilence the majority of a general court, who, provided they receive their dividend, care not who has the payment of it. Thus the proprietors have it but little in their power, either to prevent or rectify any miſconduct of their directors. I have been forced, for the ſake of perſpicuity, greatly to exceed my firſt propoſed limits, but clearneſs being ſo neceſſary in all ſubjects, this prolixity will I hope be excuſed by my reader. And

if in this account, there ſhould any thing appear diſagreeable to the company, let this plead with them, that no ſore can be cured without probing and laying it open. Half the buſineſs of a phyſician is to diſcover the nature of the malady; that being known, the medicine may be preſcribed with greater ſafety, and greater view of ſucceſs; and if I may be allowed to take upon me the character of a prober, I ſhall, ſeeing I am about it, go a little deeper, and let out ſome more of the *pus*, formed from the confinement of the power of this Eaſt-India company to this ſmall number. In the firſt place, this confined company, when upon any occaſion, they are brought into diſtreſs, and have need of the aſſiſtance or interpoſition of the nation, do either, but particularly, if it ariſes from any evident miſconduct of their own, or of their favourites employed by them, carefully conceal or diminiſh it, or elſe when obliged, in a cringing way apply to the miniſter, begging his mightineſs will be graciouſly pleaſed to aſſiſt the poor diſtreſſed 24 directors; and this he will do or not do as ſuits his humour or convenience.

Whereas the true *Engliſh Eaſt-India company*, a body of merchants the moſt reſpectable, grand and powerful of any in this world, ought never to have any want,

ought never to ſtand in need of any help, but when they can avow it and account for it; and in ſuch caſe they ought, as a ſet of men entruſted by the nation with one of her higheſt concerns, to apply with boldneſs, I do not mean licentiouſneſs, to the proper powers for their aid. I allow this company may no doubt have ſecrets which cannot be properly communicated to foreigners, to fools, or to knaves; but they cannot, at leaſt they ought not, to have any that may not be communicated to perſons deputed either by the legiſlature, or even the body of proprietors, to inſpect the ſtate of their affairs; for there are no doubt men to be found in this nation, as tender of the intereſts of their country, and conſequently of that of the company, as the 24 directors. Another diſadvantage ariſing from the confinement of this great charge to this ſmall number of hands, is this, that the nation is thereby often neceſſitated to entruſt the conduct of her moſt important affairs in the Eaſt-Indies to the management of ſuch as may have no other title or claim beſides that of affinity to, or the favour of, a director, and who, had he only his own talents or merit to raiſe and ſupport him, might in the ſervice of his country never have riſen higher than an Exciſe or Cuſtom-houſe officer, though his poſt there ſhall be

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ſuch as a high prince or the firſt peer in this realm might not diſdain, either for the grandeur of the charge, or the emoluments of the place to accept; (for 300,000 *l.* *per annum* is a royal ſalary, and to rule kings and nations is not unworthy a prince) yet ſhould any of theſe, either through miſconduct or with deſign, grievouſly injure the national intereſt, or wound her honour, they are accountable only to the 24 directors for their conduct.

I ſhould be ſorry to appear an incendiary, but cannot help obſerving here, what may prevent the like danger in future, that the meanneſs and lowneſs of our confined company procuring it ſo little reſpect from the nation, their concerns lie intirely at the diſcretion and mercy of the miniſter; for although in both the national wars in which the company was engaged, things have through the goodneſs of God turned out extremely fortunate, yet as wiſe men never allow themſelves to be guided entirely by events, without enquiring into the cauſes that produced them; an account of the cauſes of our ſucceſs on theſe two and one other occaſion, placing the merit where it is due, may prevent our being lulled into remiſſneſs, by truſting to aids which we ought not in human prudence abſolutely to confide in, without alſo exerting ourſelves. In

that which was the firſt national war in which our Eaſt-India company was engaged, this company had ſo much neglected their ſettlements abroad, as never having been before in a warlike ſtate, and the then miniſter, who extended the war to theſe countries, had been at ſo little pains to inform himſelf of the ſtate of their affairs, and had ſo much neglected to ſend out a ſufficient force to ſupport them, that M. De La Bourdonnais arriving there with his ſquadron, found not the ſmalleſt reſiſtance from Madraſs, their capital on the coaſt of Coromandel, which being the moſt expoſed, may be ſuppoſed to be the ſtrongeſt they had in India. The ſpirit of envy and diſſention ſtirred up betwixt their chiefs, and a ſtrong wind ſent by the favour of the Almighty to diſperſe and ſink part of their ſquadron, cauſes in which we cannot aſſume the leaſt merit, were the only obſtacles that on this occaſion prevented the loſs of all the Eaſt-India company's ſettlements in India. In the enſuing company's war on that coaſt during the national peace, wherein it was diſputed whether the French ſhould be ſovereigns of all Indoſtan, or the Engliſh nation retain their humble ſettlements, it was not owing to the ſupport of the company, hampered with the narrowneſs of their ſtock, but to the extraordinary efforts and

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luckily ſuperior courage and conduct of two Engliſh officers, that the French did not then abſolutely carry their point. In the laſt national war likewiſe the French were greatly beforehand with both the company and nation. When Mr. Lally arrived on that coaſt with a force in all human probability ſufficient (to make uſe of his own expreſſion) to ſwallow up the three capital Engliſh ſettlements as the three meals of one day, (and theſe indeed were but a ſecondary view) then again not ourſelves, but the *Lord of Hoſts* fought for us; for he ſent amongſt our enemies the ſpirit of pride, of diſcord, and of infatuation, which wrought wonders in our favour; and lo thus again were we ſaved: juſtly may we ſing therefore *Non nobis*. But ſhall we reſt ourſelves always ſecure on this unmerited aid? ſhall we ever thus lie a dead weight on the hands of the Lord? if we do he may at laſt drop us, for we have reaſon to expect that our adverſaries, grown wiſer by two unlucky miſcarriages, will avoid the rocks on which they before ſplit. If what hath been ſaid hath no weight, it will be needleſs to add any more on this ſubject. Beſides this probing gives pain, and that I am averſe to. Yet as example has often more weight than precept or counſel, I ſhall take the liberty to place before our eyes one or two in-

ſtances of this kind. The firſt ſhall be that of the Dutch Weſt-India company, being in itſelf moſt ſimilar in its circumſtances to our own caſe; Avert the omen, good Heaven! I mean in all but the cataſtrophe. The Dutch nation, after having ſhaken off the yoke of Spain, and aſſerted their independence and freedom, became extremely rich, by reaſon of their moſt extenſive commerce. This was the moſt glorious æra of that people, or indeed of any trading nation, for theirs did at this time greatly exceed that of all their neighbours. They had towards the end of their war with Spain attacked the Portugueze colonies in Brazil, which they had a right to do, the ſovereignty of Portugal being at that time veſted in the perſon of Philip. They ſoon overran and made themſelves maſters of three of the four diſtricts, they eſtabliſhed themſelves there; and that truly mercantile people became quickly ſenſible of the real value of their acquiſition. The nation eſtabliſhed a company to carry on and extend that trade, which, under the name of the Dutch Weſt-India company, became in a little time of ſuch conſequence, that Prince Maurice did not diſdain, nor think it below him, to ſerve this company in quality of governor of their ſettlements. This prince was a perſon of great penetration and underſtanding, and be-

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ing alſo a prince, his views extended greatly beyond the temporary ſhort-ſighted ones of merchants: He began firſt to ſecure what he had got, by building forts, and ſending over to the mother country for troops; the natives there, who were moſtly of Portugueze mixed breed, he treated with indulgence, ſo far even as to advance them money on the company's account, in order to enable them to plant and improve the country. This increaſe of expence diminiſhing the profits, did not anſwer the expectations of the company, who had been rendered over ſanguine by the great and unlooked-for ſucceſs of their rival the Eaſt-India company. They began therefore to find that a prince was not a fit governor for merchants, and after thanking him for his ſervices, civilly acquainted him, that their affairs being now through his means in a flouriſhing ſituation, they had no farther occaſion for his aſſiſtance. They ſent out four governors, men according to their own hearts. The firſt, if I remember right, was a goldſmith, the ſecond a haberdaſher, the third a broken merchant, and the fourth might be a ſuperannuated ſea-captain. Theſe four able rulers arriving in their government, immediately entered on buſineſs, conſulting on ſuch ways and means as ſhould moſt fully anſwer the ends for which they had been ſo diſtinguiſhedly ap-

appointed by their conftituents. They immediately perceived that the expence of maintaining fuch a large force as the prince had for parade introduced there, was exceffive, and altogether unneceffary, they therefore difmiffed the greateft part both of the officers and men, who accordingly returned to Europe along with prince Maurice. They next difcovered that the late governor had entered into a foolifh extravagant fcheme of building forts, magazines, &c. Thefe appearing unneceffary, they immediately difcontinued what was not finifhed. Soon after, on infpecting their books, they found that their predeceffor had lavifhed great fums of their honourable mafters money on the natives there. Thefe fums therefore they fet about collecting and calling in, and in this they proceeded with fo much rigour, that they greatly haraffed and difgufted the debtors. They likewife contrived methods to oblige all hands to work how and when they pleafed in the plantations. Thus thefe gentlemen, if we may call them fuch, gave great fatisfaction to their mafters; for in the firft year of their government the company found that by the reduction of expences, the collecting in the debts, and an extraordinary remittance of goods, their profits were vaftly greater than they had been for the three preceding years,

taken all together. During the two following years these money-making governors conducted their affairs with the like succefs and applause. But then—alas!—(Now cannot I help thinking of the old woman and her gold-laying hen) the contemned, and indeed truly contemptible but oppreffed natives, began to refent their cruel ufage, and retaliate on the Dutch, at firft in fmall parties. The governors, who came out there only to make money for their mafters—and themfelves, knew as little of the art of fighting as they did of governing; and this their foible was quickly difcovered by their adverfaries, who were thereby greatly encouraged; and receiving underhand aid in arms and counfel from the governor of the diftrict yet remaining to the Portugueze, they declared open war againft the Dutch, who having but few foldiers, and thofe badly conducted, were obliged to take refuge in fuch forts as prince Maurice had finifhed.

The governors foon acquainted their conftituents in Europe with this change in their affairs, who fent them out a fcanty reinforcement. At laft the matter beginning to grow a little more ferious, the Dutch nation took the alarm, and fent out a force, which, though it defeated the Spanifh fquadron at fea, yet proved greatly infufficient to recover their influence in thefe countries: In fhort, notwithftanding the Dutch, who were

were at that time exceſſively powerful at ſea, did employ that whole power in no leſs than three different efforts, in one of which they ſent out 35 ſhips of the line, yet were they in the end obliged to deſiſt; not in juſtice to the Portugueze, who had before the termination of this diſpute reclaimed their ſovereignty, but were ſo much afraid of the *Hogen Mogen Heers*, that they durſt ſcarcely avow their ſupporting the natives, but entirely in conſequence of their being fairly baffled. Thus this at that time mighty trading nation, which is as tenacious of its intereſts as any, was, through the narrow ſpiritedneſs of its Weſt-India company, and its governors; without the interpoſition of any foreign powers, deprived for ever of one of the richeſt and nobleſt ſettlements known. As I have not the account now by me, I may not perhaps be quite exact in every circumſtance, but yet will it be found in the main juſt enough. We have alſo ſeen theſe Portugueze, who firſt diſcovered the paſſage to the Eaſt-Indies, and by that prior advantage had rendered themſelves very powerful in thoſe countries, reduced to be the moſt contemptible of any of the European nations trading thither, and this entirely occaſioned by extending their influence beyond what they could maintain and ſupport, and alſo by the

diſguſt

diſguſt of the oppreſſed natives. We have ſeen likewiſe in our own days the French, a moſt enterpriſing nation, reduced to her primitive ſtate in thoſe countries, without force, without ſettlements, altogether owing to their graſping at too much. If examples ought to have any weight, let us learn at the coſt of others, that we may not be put ourſelves to the expence of dear-bought experience. But though I have taken upon me to act as a ſurgeon or a prober, yet will I not, as not having been regularly graduated, preſume to practiſe in the higher character of phyſician; that is the province of more ſkilful heads and hands. If I dare not however preſcribe or order what ought to be done, yet will I venture to tell ſuch as may know leſs than myſelf, and thoſe may be but few, what we ought not to do. And ſhould what I have ſaid have any weight with ſuch, I would adviſe them in this caſe not to deſire or expect corroſives, or too harſh remedies, which may only ſerve to irritate, inflame, and render incurable that ſore which may be more eaſily removed by lenitives. I know that it hath often on leſs occaſions been moved, that the charter of this company ought to be taken away, and the trade laid open; and great advantages have been promiſed to the nation from ſuch a ſtep: leſt any ſuch de-

ſire may be now again revived, I ſhall at the ſame time I have been diſcloſing the defects of the company, endeavour to obviate any prejudices that may ariſe againſt its exiſtence; and though I neither can nor need ſay but little that has not been already written by others on this head, yet as it may be more convenient for my readers to find here the arguments of Poſtlethwaite and others, than to be obliged to have recourſe for them to large volumes, I ſhall take the liberty to ſubjoin them, in anſwer to the objections ſtarted by the oppoſite ſide.

" It is frequently ſaid that our Eaſt-India " company does not trade and exert them- " ſelves to the full extent of their charter; " but that if private traders had the unre- " ſtrained liberty to drive this trade to the " full latitude it would admit of, they would " leave no part of India untraded to, eſpe- " cially all that are within the limits and " juriſdiction of the Britiſh rights.—In an- " ſwer to this it is ſaid, that the company's " not proſecuting this commerce to the ex- " tent as is pretended which it will admit " of, cannot proceed from a deficiency of " capital or credit; and what reaſon have " we to believe that they ſhould be back- " ward in augmenting their gains to the " utmoſt degree in their power?—A com- " pany; it is ſaid, cannot trade at ſo ſmall

" an expence, and therefore cannot afford " to trade for so small a profit, as private " traders can. This is allowed to be true " in the general; but before this matter " comes to be considered, the previous que- " stion is, whether we should enjoy any " share at all in this trade, if not by virtue " of the company's forts and settlements?

" The extensive correspondence, and high " credit of this company in the Indies will " certainly capacitate them to traffick in " every corner of that part of the world " within their right and privilege where they " can be gainers, and to do so where they " must be loosers, would shew little regard " to the interest of the proprietors. But " the point, if we are rightly informed, lies " here: Such branches of trade which the " company either cannot gain at all by, or " are not so gainful as others they prefer to " engage in, are actually carried on by pri- " vate British merchants, under the com- " pany's licence and authority; nor is the " company scrupulous in granting such li- " cences to persons of reputation. But as a " general and unanswerable reply to all ob- " jections, we may advance the universal " conduct of all the European nations trad- " ing to India, who whenever they adven- " tured to interfere in this trade, have con- " stantly put it under the management of a

" company; and what is to be dreaded is,
" that if we ſhould be induced to lay ſo
" diſtant a trade open, while our formida-
" ble rivals therein carry the ſame on by
" joint-ſtock companies, with great publick
" encouragement, privileges, and immuni-
" ties, we ſhould loſe all ſhare therein what-
" ſoever. However, when other European
" nations do ſo, we may venture to follow
" their example without hazard, but let us
" not be the firſt to make the experiment.
" Whoever ſhall conſider how things are to
" be diſtributed and conducted in the In-
" dies, and what a connection and depen-
" dency there is between the commerce of
" the ſeveral countries included within the
" Eaſt-India company's charter, will eaſily
" diſcern that if the whole trade, was
" in the hands of a disjointed number of
" ſeparate traders, and not under the ma-
" nagement and direction of a body of men
" converſant and thoroughly experienced
" therein, and not only capable of giving
" judicious directions, but duly impowered to
" ſee theſe directions carried into execution,
" would be impoſſible that this commerce
" ſhould continue proſperous, or even that
" it ſhould at all ſubſiſt. Experience has
" effectually ſhewn the miſchiefs that flowed
" from the ſubſiſtence, of at the ſame time
" only two Eaſt-India companies, the new
" and

" and old; fo great they were, that both " the companies foon became fenfible that " nothing but the union of their interefts " could poffibly afford a proper remedy. " Yet we conceive that the laying this trade " open, which is what hath been often con- " tended for, would be a fcheme big with " ftill greater evils and inconveniences, be- " caufe it would be at the bottom, a multi- " tiplication of companies, all acting upon " feparate interefts, which would certainly " be perpetually clafhing and interpofing " with each other, and give the powerful " and united interefts of other nations op- " portunities to deftroy them all, and for ever " exclude Britons from the whole Afiatic " trade. It may in like manner be conceived, " that if the poffeffion of the forts and fet- " tlements were in the crown, and the ma- " nagement of the trade only in the hands " of the company, it could not but be at- " tended with numberlefs inconveniences, " as, indeed experience fhewed in the reign " of king Charles the fecond, when Bom- " bay came to the crown, by his marriage " with the infanta of Portugal; and there- " fore both that ifland and the ifland of St. " Helena, have been granted to the Eaft- " India company, for the fake of publick " conveniency. We may likewife difcover " from the diforder of the company's affairs

" in

" in that reign, and in the reign of king " James, that it is highly detrimental " to this commerce, and to the benefits re- " sulting from thence to the nation, that the " company ſhould be immediately under the " power of the crown, ſo as to ſtand indebted " for all encouragement, and to have no other " reſource in caſe of grievances than what " they can draw from royal power; for this " on the one hand renders trade precarious, " and on the other intereſts a great body " of people in the ſupport of the preroga- " tive, which might be attended with con- " ſequences injurious to the conſtitution.

" But notwithſtanding it is for the inte- " reſt of the public, as well as of the pro- " prietors of the company, that a watchful " eye ſhould be had over this company, " leſt thoſe privileges and immunities ſhould " be abuſed, and the commerce ſhould not " be conducted as well for the intereſts of " the nation, as that of the conſtituents of " the corporation. And if any reaſonable " meaſures can be ſuggeſted for the advance- " ment of theſe reciprocal intereſts, they " ſhould be laid before the legiſlature," *&c*, So far Mr. Poſtlewhaite. He argued in a calm; *Tempora mutantur*. Yet his arguments for carrying on this trade by a company ſeem quite reaſonable; and now ſeems to be the time he maens for keeping a watchful eye, *&c*. I have

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as much as I think neceſſary, and that without ſelfiſh view, or deſign to inflame the minds of men. And if what I have advanced does rouſe the proprietors from that lethargy, that indifference to their intereſting concerns, it will in ſome meaſure anſwer my purpoſe; or if it only engages theſe ſtock-holders, to look a little more into their concerns, and examine the abilities of thoſe whom they ſhall be content to chooſe for their directors. Abſurd is the preſent practice of chooſing men, who are to be charged with ſuch a high truſt, by the lump in a printed liſt, which poſſibly of the 24 names in that liſt the proprietor knows only two or three, and nominates the others, becauſe they happen to be friends to his friend; and where the whole 24 may be known by the proprietor receiving this liſt, there may of that number not be more than 4 to whoſe ſkill in buſineſs he would truſt 100*l.* of his own private fortune. Ought not therefore every proprietor to make it his care to enquire inro the characters, abilities, and underſtanding, of all ſuch as are willing to ſerve the company in capacity of directors, and of them make out a liſt of his own chooſing? Let the proprietors conſider that they are ſuppoſed to ſtand in the gap between this country and danger; and that on their choice greatly depends the well or ill conducting of the greateſt commercial concerns of this nation.

F I N I S.